1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

CHAPTER IV

CHILDHOOD

857 858 WHEN the child[1] has relinquished his attempts to recapture the preferred habits of infancy, his mother gives him a little bag which she has netted for him and his father the betel-chewing accoutrements to go with it. They tell him that he has become a little man. He now turns to the play group and spends his time playing games with other children, roaming in the forest, and participating to some extent in adult activities. The sexes avoid each other from this time, the boys and the girls forming separate play groups.

• 824 825 861 262 [524] The widening of a boy's contact with the environment necessitates new discriminations about the edibility of things. While playing in the forest he comes across luscious-looking berries which may cause his death if he does not know that they are poisonous. Kwoma boys play a game in which they kill lizards and snakes and cook and eat them in a playhouse[2] in the jungle. Some of these reptiles are good to eat; others are poisonous. The parents warn the child about the objects that are poisonous. When I went for a walk with a native, he would frequently point out some class of objects to be avoided. Children were as likely to teach me as adults. Once a little girl of eight was scathing in her comments about me because I did not know that a certain berry was not good to eat. Although I observed no specific example of an older sibling using this technique on a younger one, I feel confident that it occurred rather frequently. In any case, the training

[115] [123] [1] Mey, Fit, Kwos, Gwamp, Ham, and Hamb—boys, and Afi, Buka, Haya, Toka, Kayamaka, and Yawa—girls, constituted the personnel of the childhood age group of Rumbiina hamlet. Mey, Fit, Kwos, and Ham spent much of their time running in and out of my house and playing near by and therefore provided most of the observational data on the boys in this age group. Afi and Buka, who lived in houses next to mine, provided most of the data on girls.

[2] A rough bough hut which children construct for play.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

of Kwoma children is very effective in this respect. Errors and warnings sharply differentiate the things in the environment which may, and those which may not, be eaten, with the result that Kwoma children show a remarkable knowledge of the local flora and fauna.

Parents provide their children with a general formula to keep them from eating harmful food. The formula is: if you do not know a thing is good to eat, do not try it. I have no data on how this fear of strangeness is transmitted to the child, but I did observe the fact that children generally reacted with fear to strange objects and persons.

A Kwoma child learns that, in addition to things naturally inedible, there are also foods which are made poisonous by sorcerers. Boys and girls are told never to eat food given them by a stranger or a non-relative, for it may be poisoned by the insertion of a magical white powder. As an example of parental training on this point, Wof refused to allow Mey and Fit to eat at my house because I bought bananas, pawpaws, yams, and other vegetables from people of other hamlets. He also warned us not to eat this food, for we might have enemies in the tribe who would try to poison us. Another illustration of the manner in which this eating restriction is inculcated occurred when Marok's dog died. It was his best hunting dog, and both he and his wife and sister were very fond of the animal. When it died, they wailed as they would have done for a member of the family. It died early one morning, and the women mourned throughout the day. By afternoon flies had gathered about the dead animal and laid their eggs upon it. Mey, Fit, and Buka were with me when Marok pointed to these flyblows and told me that this was the poisonous white powder which sorcerers use. This was definite proof, he said, that someone had tried to poison him or one of his family, but that the unfortunate dog had eaten the food instead and died as a result. All the children of the hamlet soon knew the imputed cause of the dog's death, and it is probable that this knowledge served to strengthen their fear of food not prepared by relatives.

A child is warned about another type of sorcery which also

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

One evening I started whistling when Mar and Gwiyap, two adolescents, were in my home. They told me to stop, warning me that ghosts would come if I persisted. I continued to whistle in order to discover what their reactions would be. They pleaded with me to cease and finally bolted for home.

A marked change takes place in a boy's reaction to *marsalai* when he reaches adolescence. At about the age of puberty he is initiated into the first stage of the yam cult.[24] He must first decide whether he wishes to join the *yenema* or *minjapa* section. Although it is presumably up to him to make this choice, his father, older *brothers*, and *paternal uncles* exert considerable pressure upon him. It is their wish to keep the hamlet about equally represented in each section and they therefore see to it that such a balance is maintained by influencing the adolescents who are ready to make their choice.

After a boy has decided which section he will join, he is taken into the forest, where a rude hut has been constructed at a sufficient distance from the hamlet, so that women cannot hear. Here the young men of the hamlet who have recently been initiated meet to practice gong beating and flute playing.[25] Their practice is overseen and criticized by older men, the parents and *uncles* of the novices. On the first occasion that a boy attends one of these practice meetings, he is told that the sounds that he has heard as a child during ceremonies are man-made and not the voices of *marsalai*. He pretends to be surprised because theoretically he should not know what in fact he already does. He is also told at this time that he must not in any way reveal this secret to any child or female, and he is warned very seriously that the mere knowledge of the secret of the cult may kill such persons. Then, during sporadic meetings over a period of sev-

[24] Boys are sometimes initiated into the cult a year or so before physiological pubescence. It has seemed more expedient, however, to describe it in this rather than the previous chapter. This initiation should not be confused with the age-grade initiation.

[25] The spot for the camp is picked near a variety of tropical tree which has flange-like roots. These roots ring out when beaten and are used as a substitute for gongs.

761 A man of Duwus died this afternoon. He was an old man, so it was
534 taken as a matter of course. There was not much talk about sorcery,
[764] although it was agreed that he died of sunga (poison). Just after sundown, the gongs of all the house tamberans were tolled simultaneously, as a tribute. It was very effective. War and Way tolled the Rumbima gongs.

824 Kwiya had brought back the roots of mank, a swamp grown tree with aerial roots. The bark had been removed. She was whipping it against a tree and shredding it, taking out fine strong threads about eight feet long. War stopped in and took one of the roots.

602 I was down at Mar's when Wof began ranting about, and calling for Uka.
578 There was no firewood. Why hadn't she brought it? After scolding her, he gave her a couple of thumps on the back with the flat of his hand which I could hear distinctly. Uka began crying. Kwiya, Awambaka and Yawa were angry with Wof for this. Awambaka told me to go up and fight him. Mar and Gwiyap said nothing.

861 Kum broke Gwiyap's belt by playing with it. Gwiyap, Kwiya, and Awa began scolding him for it. He was standing just outside the house. They told him to come and get beaten. Kum stood still leaning on a shovel and did not answer or move. Gwiyap did not go after him.

124 I tried to get Awa to give me kinship terms this morning, but she wouldn't despite/half hour's cajoling and threatening. Tonight at her house, she gave them willingly.

586 Mamoy came through on the way back from Tangwishamp. He had helped the "finish timers" carry their bones and had gone to collect pay for his no. 2 wife, Tangwahek who had left him to marry a Tangwishamp. The story is that Mamoy beat up his no. 1 wife and no. 2 had run away. When he arrived at Tangwishamp, he found that she and her new husband had gone to Amaki to hide, so he did not get his pay.

Cordage manufacture

283 [192] The bark of the nkuisi tree is peeled off in short strips (one to two feet long). These strips are beaten on a stone with a wooden beater (an ordinary stick about two inches in diameter and a foot long). This breaks and loosens the outer shell of the bark and leaves the fibrous inner bark. It is then put in the sun to dry for a few hours. Next it is separated into small fluffy tufts. The tuft is rolled downward on the thigh with the palm of the hand. Another is similarly prepared and the two are rolled down the thigh separately but with the same motion of the hand. The hand is then brought back and the two are rolled together in the opposite direction. During this last movement the hand is twisted so that the index finger rather than the palm effects the twining. Two tufted ends are left over to which new tufted pieces are added and the process is continued.

Twine dyeing

386 824 Twine is dyed by fastening one end of the twine to the big toe and rubbing a raw berry held between thumb and finger back and forth over it. The berried used for dye are from two trees, *kpainffi* and *nowi*, the former producing a dark blue color and the latter an orange red. Men plant [245] the *nowi* trees near their houses by inserting the fruit in the ground with a digging stick. The Germans brought the seeds of this to Ambunti and it [177] was brought to the Boogwem through Yambon. (Yambon is a river tribe). Before [178] this the red dyeing was done with red clay.

286 386 The net bags worn by women and used for carrying are made from twines dyed red and blue, as well as from natural colored twines.

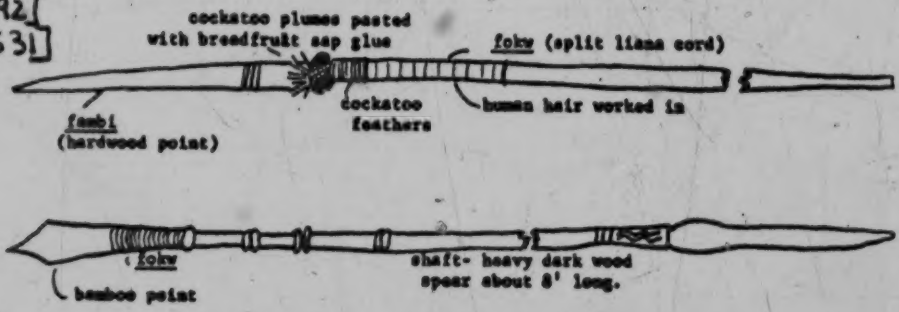
Spears

411 A description of how the spear is thrown appears in the section on pig hunting.

411 322 Bamboo spear points are used as well as hardwood points. Those made from bamboo are frequently found about the house drying. They are made by splitting a large bamboo stalk, one and one half to two inches in diameter. The sides are sprung apart by small pegs to keep the bamboo from shriveling together and to open and flatten it slightly. The section cut contains one node and about two or three inches of a second node which is used at a butt. These sections are put in the peak of the house and dried for several months. They are then sharpened and if not immediately used, are put back with the spreders still intact.

411 The figures below show not only a man hunting spear, but also decorations from some spear handles.

[824] [192] [531]



Pottery Manufacture

323 Ochre colored earth is obtained and worked with water with a piece of stick a foot long, one to two inches in diameter, on a sago bark slab. There are numbrous pits in the vicinity where the proper material for pottery can be obtained. When the mixture has been thoroughly pounded, lumps are taken and rolled out into coils with the palm of the hand on another bark slab. The long narrow leaf of the ngola plant (which produces notí, the red berried 1' - 2' cobbwhose seeds are boiled and eaten) is taken and coiled so that it resembles a large raised doughnut. Additional leaves are coiled diagonally and fastened so that the "doughnut" ring keeps its shape. These leaf rings vary in size for small or large pots. Several may be seen about the house. They are called nonguesele.

[824] [192] [262] [192]

When the clay materials are ready, a large leaf or two freshly picked are placed across the coil. Then a rope of clay is taken and put onto the leaves and threaded around the form clockwise. The pots are not flat bottomed but rounded-- like a hemisphere of a coconut shell split lengthwise. As coils are added to build up the side they are pressed down firmly. There is little flare to the side walls.

The inner walls are smoothed with the ulnar side of the second joint of the index finger in a counter-clockwise fashion. The outside is smoothed with the palm of the hand.

When the pots have been completed they are left in the sun to dry for several weeks before firing. To fire a pot, three stones are arranged in a triangle and the pot is propped on these with a stick, on its side. Dry sago spathes are packed around the outside and inside, and then burned. Pots are usually fired inside the house, although they are sometimes moved into the sun. It is thought that one must not speak loudly while pots are being baked, for they may break.

Other containers

322
415
[192]
[824]

To make a lime gourd (weff), the stem of a green gourd is cut; the seeds are chipped out with a bamboo sliver, and shaken out with some of the meat. The gourd is then stuffed with leaves of a bush taro (kwasfabonkf) and filled with water. It is wrapped with breadfruit leaves and cooked for about fifteen minutes. Then it is removed, emptied, and scraped inside and out. Next it is put in the sun to dry. (If the taro leaves are not put inside, the gourd will turn black.)

415
192
[386]

Gourd pot (nafrfmaf)

This particular pot is used for storing the sap of kwer, a hardwood tree, used as a base for black body paint (keyi). A similar cradle is made for a long gourd.